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neers, American Society of Mechanical Engineers and American Institute of Electrical Engineers) held a joint meeting in the Engineering Societies Building in New York City devoted to the conservation of our natural resources. In the absence (due to illness) of Onward Bates, president of the senior society, Dr. James Douglas, president of the Institute of Mining Engineers, presided. Addresses were delivered on behalf of the four organizations on "The Conservation of Water," by John R. Freeman; on "The Conservation of our Natural Resources by Legislation," by Dr. R. W. Raymond; on "The Waste of our Natural Resources by Fire," by Charles Whiting Baker, and on "Electricity and the Conservation of Energy," by Lewis B. Stillwell. In addition to the set addresses, Dr. Douglas outlined in general terms the development of the conservation idea and the important part played by the engineering societies in directing attention to the nature and extent of resources and to the enormous wastes in utilizing them; while John Hays Hammond read a communication addressed to the meeting by President Taft commending its purposes and reiterating his deep interest in the natural resources and their conservation. The meeting was especially notable as marking a definite policy of cooperation on the part of the engineering interests of the country and of the four great national organizations in which these interests find expression. The attendance was large, including a number of engineers and guests from other cities.

W J MCGEE

#### SCIENCE BY CABLE

WE reproduce the following cablegrams to the daily papers which, in so far as they are correct, are certainly of interest:

London, March 26.—Addressing the Chemical Society yesterday afternoon, Sir William Ramsey announced that he had succeeded in transmuting four different substances into carbon; namely, zirconium, thorium, hydro-lutorsilicic acid and bismuth. Experiments with silver nitrate, with the object of transforming silver in the same manner as copper is transformed into lithium, gave negative results.

Paris, March 23.—The astronomer Gaillot announced before the Academy of Sciences last night that he had discovered two new planets situated beyond Neptune, which is the outermost known planet of the solar system. M. Gaillot stated that he had used the methods which had enabled Leverrier by mathematical calculation to assign to Neptune a position within the boundaries of a certain region, which permitted of its discovery in 1846. M. Gaillot estimated that one of the planets was forty-five times and the other sixty times the distance of the earth from the sun, or 4,185,000,000 and 5,580,000,000 miles respectively. The planet Neptune it is estimated is 2,800,000,000 miles from the sun.

Berlin, March 26.—Professor Richard Greeff, of the Berlin University Eye Hospital, announced the discovery of the germ of trachoma. The finding of this germ resulted from experiments with apes conducted with funds supplied by the German government.

#### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

THE return of Lieutenant Ernest H. Shackleton, of the British navy, from his Antarctic explorations and his remarkable results in reaching a point within a hundred miles of the South Pole, in reaching the magnetic pole, in ascending Mt. Erebus and in making discoveries of importance in many directions, were announced in the daily papers of March 24.

DR. E. PFLÜGER, professor of physiology at Bonn, has been awarded the gold medal for art and science by the German emperor, on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of his appointment to the full professorship.

DR. ALBRECHT PENCK, professor of geography at Berlin, has been elected an honorary member of the Geographical Society at Rome.

MR. B. E. DAHLGREN, formerly modeler at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, has been appointed modeler to the botanical department of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. Mr. Dahlgren is now in Jamaica making studies for the reproduction of a series of tropical plants representative of structural characteristics as well as economic use.